THE GUERRILLA NARRATIVE OF KIM IL SUNG'S *WORKS* AND REGIME STABILITY IN THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF KOREA

by

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STATEMENT OF THESIS APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

In *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters*, Brian Myers writes that the numerous volumes containing Kim Il Sung's works are "more often praised than read. [A]t most [they function] as an imposing row of book-spines, a prop in [his] personality cult." This perspective suggests that the presence of the *Works* rather than its content is its most important characteristic. I argue that Kim's works serve a larger function by contributing to the legitimacy narrative the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) constructs about its leader.

The first half of the first volume of Kim's *Works* covers a historical period critically important to the DPRK's legitimacy rhetoric, the period from 1930 to 1943. Kim's legitimacy as the leader of his nation stems from his guerrilla activities during the 1930s and early 1940s. Perhaps more than any other factor, this guerrilla pedigree forms the foundation for all of Kim's other virtues by which he claims right to the leadership of the DPRK.

In this thesis, I examine the rhetoric about his compatriots, and the guerrilla war they are waging against the Japanese using text from the first half of the first volume of the *Works*. In this selection, the *Works* creates a narrative about these textual themes

intended to help stabilize the DPRK regime during a time of great change inside and outside the country. First, the narrative seeks to reinforce Kim's right to be the DPRK's "great leader" by creating a persona for him as the epitome of a revolutionary leader. By bolstering Kim's legitimacy through the creation of this persona, it also seeks to reinforce his son's claim to the leadership of the nation after him. Second, the narrative strives to justify the DPRK's military build-up and spending and glorify military service as the highest expression of patriotism. The *Works* uses this persona of the guerrilla leader it creates to construct a picture of the model citizenry for the people to emulate. This model citizenry is built around the values of the guerrilla army the persona of Kim led in the 1930s and 1940s.

"Every one sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are,

and those few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of the many,

who have the majesty of the state to defend them[.]"

– Nicolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Chapter XVIII

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army……....AJPGA

Democratic People's Republic of Korea…….DPRK

Foreign Languages Publishing House……..FLPH

Korean Communist Party……...KCP

Korean People's Revolutionary Army……KPRA

People's Republic of China……PRC

Republic of Korea……..ROK

United Nations…….UN

United States of America……..US

Young Communist League……YCL

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Though my name is the one that appears on the title page as this thesis's author, the truth is that without the generous and constant support of mentors, family, and friends, it never would have been completed. I would like to thank first and foremost my advisor, Dr. Deberniere J. Torrey, who bore with me over many months of frustration as I tried to define my research topic and who graciously granted me more than one "one more day" to finish chapters and drafts. Similarly, I would also like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Janet Theiss and Dr. Kirk W. Larsen, who both willingly offered their time and expertise and were an integral part of the realization of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

"Respected and beloved Comrade Kim Il Sung is a great thinker and theoretician." So reads the opening line of the introductory note to Kim Il Sung's *Works*, found in its first volume. The introductory note goes on to laud his many accomplishments, leaving the reader with the impression that Kim Il Sung single-handedly created, protected, and nurtured the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, also North Korea). It is an impression that only strengthens as one penetrates deeper into the *Works*, and that impression is meant to convey the idea that Kim Il Sung is indispensable to the DPRK. The last sentence in the third paragraph of the introductory note confirms this: after listing his accomplishments, it says, "He has thus turned our poor and backward country into a rich, strong and developed socialist country."[1]

[1] Il-sŏng Kim, *Kim Il Sung: Works*, Vol. 1 (Pyongyang, Korea: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1980), p. i ("뒤떨어졌전 우리 나라를 부강하고 발전된 사회주의나라로 전변시키시었다." Il-sŏng Kim, *Kim Il-sŏng Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1 (P'yŏngyang, Chosŏn: Chosŏn Nodongdang Ch'ulp'ansa, 1979), p. i).

An Introduction to Kim Il Sung's *Works*

The *Works*

The first volumes of Kim Il Sung's *Works* were published first in Korean in April 1979, with subsequent volumes published in the years following.[2] The English translation of the first few volumes followed quickly, published by the Foreign Language Publishing House (FLPH) just a year later in April 1980. Altogether, the *Works*—an extensive collection of "reports, speeches, lectures, talks and others by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung"[3]—comprises forty-eight volumes of several hundred pages each. The volumes and the essays in them are arranged chronologically and vary widely with respect to the topics and audiences they address. With the exception of the first volume and the two volumes covering the Korean War, each volume covers one calendar year. This thesis focuses on the first volume, which covers June 1930 to December 1945, the longest period of any volume. During this time in history, Korean and Chinese resistance fighters, including Kim Il Sung himself, were waging guerrilla warfare against the imperial Japanese army in Manchuria. As I discuss in a later chapter of this thesis, Kim Il Sung's participation in this guerrilla warfare and resistance to the Japanese form the foundation of his legitimacy as leader of the DPRK.

The *Works* was not the first collection of Kim Il Sung's writings and speeches to be published, though they are the most extensive. Topical collections were being published years before the *Works*—the 1969 *Let Us Promote the World Revolution,*

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[2] The Korean title of the *Works* is 김일성저작집 (*Kim Il-sŏng Chŏjakchip*).

[3] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. iii. For ease of reference, I refer to all of these disparate documents as "essays," making distinctions when relevant for the analysis. This introductory note does not exist in the Korean edition.

Holding High the Banner of Marxism-Leninism and Proletarian Internationalism, the Banner of Anti-Imperialist, Anti-U.S. Struggle is one example.[4] A five-volume *Selected Works* was published in 1971, which contains several of the essays also published in the *Works*.[5] Many other volumes of Kim Il Sung's writings and speeches were published during the 1970s, but these were almost exclusively topical volumes organized around ideas such as the DPRK idea of socialism or Juche. It is interesting timing, then, that the extensive, forty-eight volume *Works* would make an appearance in 1979, just eight years after the *Selected Works* was published.

The Guerrilla Narrative of the *Works*

Since even one volume of the *Works* contains an impressive amount of content, more specifically, this thesis examines the first half of the first volume. This first half of Volume 1 is comprised of twenty essays dated between June 1930 and September 1943, and covers the period during which Kim Il Sung was a guerrilla resistance fighter against

[4] This volume contains titles such as "The Friendship and Solidarity Formed Between the Korean and Cuban Peoples in the Struggle Against U.S. Imperialism, the Common Enemy, Will Be Eternal," "Let Us Embody More Thoroughly the Revolutionary Spirit of Independence, Self-Sustenance and Self-Defense in All Fields of State Activity (Excerpts)," and "The Korean People Will Always Stand Firmly by the Tanzanian People Fighting Against Imperialism and Colonialism for the Independent Development of Their Country and Will Remain Their Reliable Friends," to name just a few. You need never wonder what an essay is about when you read its title in one of those collections.

[5] A cursory review of these essays showed that there were no significant changes in the essays published in both volumes, but I was not able to make a thorough perusal to see if they differed in small particulars. Interestingly, the *Selected Works*, like the later *Works* and unlike the other volumes published during the 1970s, is organized chronologically and not topically. This means that, like the *Works*, it covers a wide variety of topics over a long period of time. However, unlike the *Works*, the *Selected Works* begins in October 1945—none of the essays I examine in this thesis were published in the *Selected Works*. This is a strange omission, considering the importance of that period of history to Kim Il Sung and the DPRK.

the imperial Japanese army in Manchuria. To avoid confusing this narrative with the narrative of the entire *Works*, I will refer to these essays as "the guerrilla narrative" as I examine them collectively in this thesis.

In using the word *guerrilla*, I am departing from the terminology of the *Works*; nowhere in the first half of Volume 1 does the word *guerrilla* appear. The *Works* uses various forms of the word *revolutionary* extensively, and refers to this idea using forms of words such as *liberation*, *resistance*, and *independence*, as well. Indeed, it is difficult to find a page in the *Works* without several mentions of these words in their diverse incarnations. I decided to use *guerrilla narrative* as the term of reference for the section of the *Works* I examine to separate my voice from the voice of Kim Il Sung in the *Works*, as well as to conform with the terminology used by scholars who also focus on the importance of this period to the history and rhetoric of the DPRK.[6] It is a reference both to the actual historical period, during which Kim Il Sung and his contemporaries were engaged in guerrilla activities against the Japanese, and also to the ethos which guerrilla narrative creates. Thus, for example, when I discuss the characteristics of a guerrilla, the reader is meant to understand that this term references the *Works*'s understanding and use of *revolution*, *independence*, *liberation*, etc.

Below is a short outline of the essays that make up the guerrilla narrative. With the titles of the essays, I include also the location and date information in the header of each essay.

[6] See the section "English-Language Korean Scholarship and the *Works*" in this chapter (p. 12) as well as "A Guerrilla Nation" in Chapter 3 (p. 42) for an elaboration on this idea and the scholars who have written about it.

"The Path of the Korean Revolution" (Kalun, June 10, 1930).

This is a report given to a meeting of the leaders of the Young Communist League (YCL) and the Anti-Imperialist Youth league. In it, Kim Il Sung criticizes the organizers of the May 30 Uprising and calls for the revolution to be organized on correct revolutionary principles. These include properly understanding the Korean situation, preparing for armed struggle against the Japanese imperialists, and avoiding factionalism.

"Let Us Repudiate the 'Left' Adventurist Line and Follow the Revolutionary Organizational Line" (Yanji County, May 20, 1931).

This is a speech given at the meeting of Party and YCL cadres. In it, he again condemns the leaders of the May 30 Uprising as factionalists and flunkeys who damaged the revolution and calls for leaders with a correct understanding of the Korean revolution to properly organize and educate the masses on correct revolutionary principles and encourage them to armed struggle.

"On Organizing and Waging Armed Struggle Against Japanese Imperialism" (Yanji County, December 16, 1931).

This is a speech delivered to the same audience as above. Kim Il Sung calls for armed struggle against the Japanese through the organization of an Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army (AJPGA), mobilizing the entire population, cooperation with the Chinese guerrillas, establishing a guerrilla base, and strengthening the work of the cadres.

"On the Occasion of Founding the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army" (April 25, 1932).

This is a speech given to commemorate the founding of the AJPGA. He commends the people for rising up in armed struggle and details the crimes of the Japanese. He calls for more determination and loyalty to the cause, for the establishment of guerrilla zones, and for cooperation of with the Chinese fighting the Japanese.

"To Spread and Develop the Armed Struggle into the Homeland" (Onsong Area, March 11, 1933).

This is a speech given to leaders and political workers of underground revolutionary organizations. Kim Il Sung describes the current condition of the armed struggle against the Japanese and congratulates the revolutionaries on their victories. He stresses the need to rally the whole nation to the cause of the revolution and armed struggle.

"On the Tasks for Improving the Work of the Young Communist League" (Wangqing, March 27, 1933).

In this speech given to a meeting of the YCL, Kim Il Sung addresses shortcomings in the YCL's work, mainly for failing to grow the ranks adequately. He details the kind of recruits they need, urges better ideological education, and reminds them that victory depends on their dedication and sacrifice.

"Let Us Wipe Out Factionalism and Strengthen the Unity and Cohesion of the Revolutionary Ranks" (May 10, 1933).

This is the first of Kim Il Sung's writings in the *Works*, a pamphlet. Its primary message condemns factionalism, detailing the crimes of the factionalists and blaming them for the dissolution of the Korean Communist Party (KCP), the needless deaths of many revolutionaries, and for hindering the work of the revolution. He exhorts the people to eliminate factionalism and unite firmly in one revolutionary purpose.

"On Relinquishing the Guerrilla Zones and Advancing Over Wide Areas" (Yaoyinggou, March 27, 1935).

After almost a two-year gap, Kim Il Sung gives this speech to cadres of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army (KPRA). He again cautions against factionalists, and announces that the revolution has entered into a new stage of wider engagement with the Japanese, leaving the established guerrilla zones.

"The Tasks of Communists in the Strengthening and Development of the Anti-Japanese National-Liberation Struggle" (Nanhutou, February 27, 1936).

This is a report given to the same audience as above. He discusses the need to take advantage of their recent victories to move into the homeland, establish new guerrilla zones along the border, and step up the armed struggle against the Japanese. He advocates for an expansion of the anti-Japanese united front movement and for preparation to establish a Marxist-Leninist Party.

"The Ten-Point Programme of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland" (May 5, 1936).

This is a two-page list of enumerated points detailing the goals of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. Its main focus is on freeing the Korean people from the various forms of Japanese oppression and the feudal restrictions of the past.

"The Inaugural Declaration of the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland (May 5, 1936).

This declaration elaborates on the Ten-Point Programme above. Its main themes are unity in the cause of the national liberation and a dedication to armed struggle.

"Let Us Inspire the People with Hopes of National Liberation by Advancing with Large Forces into the Homeland" (Xigang, Fusong County, March 29, 1937).

This is a speech given to the cadres of the KPRA. Kim Il Sung details the successful implementation of the line adopted at the conference of the same body the previous year (see the speech dated February 27, 1936). He describes the worsening plight of those still under the Japanese and what should be done to expand the revolution and the territory under its control.

"Proclamation" (June 1, 1937).

This is a short, one-page exhortation to join with the KPRA in resisting the Japanese in armed struggle, liberating the nation, and improving the lives of the people.

"Let Us Fight on Staunchly for the Liberation of the Fatherland" (Pochonbo, June 4, 1937).

This is a short speech given after the KPRA emerged victorious from a clash with the Japanese. Kim Il Sung elaborates on the crimes of the Japanese, hails the victories of the KPRA over the last seven years, and calls on the people to resist the Japanese by supporting the KRPA materially and morally.

"The Tasks of Korean Communists" (November 10, 1937).

By far the longest essay in the guerrilla narrative, this treatise explains the current conditions of the revolution and the immediate tasks confronting the Korean communists. Its main themes are the need for greater dedication to the cause of the revolution, the vital role of armed struggle, the necessity of engaging the masses in the revolution, and remembering the unique Koreanness of the revolution.

"Let Us Continue to Strike Powerful Counterblows at the Japanese Imperialist Aggressors and Advance to the Homeland" (Beidadingzi, April 3, 1939).

This is a speech delivered to leaders of the KPRA a year and a half after the above. In it, Kim Il Sung congratulates them on the glorious success of the goals from an unreported meeting the previous year despite intense opposition. He then exhorts them to further victory by correctly educating the masses and strengthening the KPRA politically and militarily.

"Let Us Raise High the Torchlight of Revolution in the Homeland" (Pegaebong, Musan Area, May 20, 1939).

> This speech is delivered to the same audience as above. In it, Kim Il Sung explains the current conditions of the revolution as it has progressed into the homeland. He then details the next steps they should take, emphasizing educating the masses and improving their revolutionary fervor.

"Let Us Rise Up Vigorously in the Anti-Japanese Struggle to Hasten the Liberation of the Homeland" (Sinsadong, Musan Area, May 22, 1939).

> In this address to the people of the area, Kim Il Sung enumerates the crimes of the Japanese, praises the victorious KPRA, and details the need for unity and greater dedication to the cause of national liberation in preparation for establishing a new nation of the people. He exhorts them to support the KPRA however they can.

"On Preparing for the Great Event of National Liberation" (Xiaohaerbaling, Dunhua County, August 10, 1940).

> Returning to the audience of KPRA cadres with this report, Kim Il Sung summarizes the rapidly changing situation of the revolution in the international context and advocates preparing well for the event of national liberation. This preparation primarily includes strengthening the KPRA politically and militarily and rallying the masses. He also establishes that from that point onward, large-unit activities will be suspended in favor of smaller units engaged in political and military work.

"The Korean Revolutionaries Must Know Korea Well" (September 15, 1943).

> After a long silence, Kim Il Sung gives this speech to the political cadres and instructors of the KPRA. In it, he heaps effusive praises on the Korean people, their long history of brilliant accomplishments and military-mindedness, and their beautiful and rich land. He stresses the need to be educated in these things and to emulate the historical Koreans in defense of their homeland.

The Audience for the *Works*

The guerrilla narrative of the *Works* discussed here is supposed to be a collection of "reports, speeches, lectures, talks and others by the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung" given during his years as a resistance fighter. If they were truly delivered in the time and place the *Works* claims they were, their original audience was Kim Il Sung's fellow

guerrillas, people who would go on to become citizens of the DPRK and even some of its highest ranking officials. But by collecting and distributing them in the format of the *Works*, the regime offers Kim Il Sung's words and wisdom to a wider audience, people who for whatever reason could not be there in person when they were given, citizens of the DPRK, ROK, and foreign nations alike.

The primary audience for the *Works* is obviously intended to be the citizens of the DPRK. It was first written in Korean and published in the DPRK. The introductory note closes with a claim that the works of Kim Il Sung are "widely read by the people and the demand for them is growing daily." The accuracy of this statement is suspect because of the well-documented tendency of the DPRK propaganda machine to overstate, but there could be some truth to it.[7] The DPRK had a fairly high literacy rate and made significant investments in education and political literacy as it engaged in building up its new state.[8] It is likely that the regime formed study groups to read and discuss the writings and sayings of its Great Leader, as they had done and would do for previous and subsequent works of both Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il.[9]

However, the *Works* was also intended to reach beyond the DPRK. The next obvious audience for the *Works* was the country directly to the south of the DPRK, a

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[7] There does not seem to be any scholarship on this specifically; it seems to be an accepted fact in the community of scholars that works with DPRK sources, and also in the general public, as well. See Dae-Sook Suh, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. xiii for an example.

[8] Andrei Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung: The Formation of North Korea, 1945–1960* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2002), p. 39; see also Michael J. Seth, *History of Korea: From Antiquity to the Present* (Blue Ridge Summit, Penn., USA: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2010), p. 344.

[9] Adrian Buzo, *Modern Korea*, p. 127.

country that shared a common history and language, the Republic of Korea. In the decades following the Korean War, Kim Il Sung devoted resources to encouraging unrest and rebellion in the ROK as well as to military buildup in his own country; he cherished hopes of the two countries being reunited under his leadership.[10] At the time, that hope was perhaps not as outlandish as it sounds now. In the late 1970s, the economic and political situation of the ROK, both domestically and internationally, was volatile enough to support that ambition. While it is highly unlikely that the *Works* was compiled solely to take advantage of the situation in the south, Kim Il Sung would have seen an opportunity to show the ROK that he and the DPRK were a more attractive and stable option than their current regime.

The fact that the *Works* was translated into English and published by the FLPH is compelling evidence that Kim Il Sung's ambitions were not limited to the Korean peninsula alone. Besides translating them into English, to further help the foreign reader, the FLPH included at the beginning of each English volume a helpful explanatory and summarizing note that is absent in the Korean editions. However, hopes that the *Works* would reach a large international audience or inspire a devoted Kim Il Sung following abroad were dashed as researchers and the general public alike gave them little notice. The *Works* is at once both glaringly obvious and frustratingly opaque; the English prose is repetitive, overwrought, and soporific. A casual reader is unlikely to read far into such

[10] Jong-chun Baek, "North Korea Military Policy and the Peace Process on the Korean Peninsula" (*The Journal of East Asian Affairs* 4, no. 2 (1990): 311–41. www.jstor.org), p. 321; see also Buzo, *Modern Korea*, p. 128–29 and Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999), p. 59–60; also Don Oberdorfer, *The Two Koreas: A Contemporary History* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 99.

prose, and even a dedicated one would likely falter well before the last pages of Volume 48—or even Volume 1.

Exigency of the Guerrilla Narrative

I chose to examine the guerrilla narrative of the *Works* in particular for several reasons. First, they cover a historical period that is not widely addressed by English scholarship on Korea, which generally concentrates on events transpiring after World War II or, to a lesser extent, pre-colonial Korea. Second, the time period covered by the guerrilla narrative is vitally important to the history of the DPRK and key to the legitimacy narrative of the Kim family. Third, and most pertinent to the argument of this thesis, the timing of the *Works*'s publication and its content are partially a reaction to events transpiring at the end of the 1970s, specifically, as preparation for the public announcement of Kim Jong Il as heir apparent in October 1980.

In this thesis, I argue that the guerrilla narrative of the *Works* aims to accomplish two main goals, intended to help stabilize the DPRK regime during a time of great change inside and outside the country. First, it seeks to reinforce Kim Il Sung's right to the mantle of the "great leader" of the DPRK; and, by extension, it seeks to reinforce his son Kim Jong Il's claim to the leadership of the nation after him. It does this by creating a persona for Kim Il Sung as the epitome of leadership. Second, it strives to justify the DPRK's strong focus on military build-up and spending, and glorify military service as the highest expression of patriotism and devotion to Kim Il Sung. It does this by creating a model of a citizenship that has military service as its highest ideal and honor.

Using the first half of the first volume as a study example, I argue in this thesis that the guerrilla narrative comprising the first twenty essays of the *Works* was constructed to support Kim Il Sung's right to the mantle of the "great leader" of the DPRK and, by extension, to justify and legitimate the dynastic succession of his son Kim Jong Il to follow in his footsteps as the country's next leader. During a time of turmoil and change, and especially in the face of the weakening DPRK economy just as the Republic of Korea (ROK) was becoming prosperous just over the border, it was imperative that something be done to reassure the citizens of the DPRK that they still lived in "paradise on earth."[11]

English-Language Korean Scholarship and the *Works*

The *Works* is generally overlooked by English-speaking scholars and researchers, as well as by the general public. Few scholars discuss the actual content of any of Kim Il Sung's speeches or writings at length. For those that do, scholarship revolves around Juche or Confucianism. For example, Alzo David-West in "Between Confucianism and Marxism-Leninism: Juche and the Case of Chŏng Tasan" cites volume twenty-one of the *Works* twice.[12] Jin Woong Kang cites a few essays in different volumes of the *Works* in "Political Uses of Confucianism in North Korea," but these, too, are references to much later volumes; the earliest one he cites is volume nineteen.[13] Even Brian Myers, who has

[11] B. R. Myers, *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters* (Brooklyn, New York: Melville House, 2010), p. 154.

[12] Alzo David-West. "Between Confucianism and Marxism-Leninism: Juche and the Case of Chŏng Tasan" (*Korean Studies* 35 (2011): 93–121. www.jstor.org).

[13] Jin Woong Kang. "Political Uses of Confucianism in North Korea." (*The Journal of Korean Studies* 16, no. 1 (2011): 63–87. www.jstor.org).

done so much work on DPRK propaganda, makes a single reference to the entire 48-volume *Works* in his 2011 book *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves—And Why It Matters*. Once again, that reference is to a later volume, number twenty-seven. He referenced the same essay in his earlier 2008 article "Ideology as Smokescreen: North Korea's Juche Thought." Since the book builds on the theme introduced by the article, that is unsurprising.[14] Charles K. Armstrong cites volumes eight and nine of the *Works* in his 2013 book *The Koreas*, but again his focus is on Juche, not the *Works*.[15]

Perhaps scholars pay little attention to the *Works* and other collections of Kim Il Sung's works because of the perception of unreliability and strong DPRK bias. This is undeniably true. As sources of factual information, they are not very useful.[16] Even a cursory investigator would get no further than the *Works*'s table of contents before finding something counterfactual; a more leisurely investigation into the essays themselves reveals a picture of history that has little in common with the generally accepted historiography of the Korean peninsula. Little, if any, evidence exists to

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[14] B. R. Myers. *The Cleanest Race: How North Koreans See Themselves and Why It Matters* (Brooklyn, New York: Melville House, 2010), and Brian Myers, "Ideology As Smokescreen: North Korea's Juche Thought," in *Critical Readings on North and South Korea,* ed. J.E. Hoare, Vol. 1. (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 267–88.

[15] Charles K. Armstrong, *The Koreas,* 2nd ed. (New York, New York: Routledge, 2013).

[16] "North Korean sources are highly propagandistic and unreliable for ascertaining factual information about specific events. In an effort to justify the system's present posture, many original records are suppressed and many more are rewritten to promote Kim [Il Sung]." Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. xiii.

corroborate some of the more remarkable claims made by Kim Il Sung in the *Works*, and again, some run counter to events as English scholarship about Korea understands them.[17]

However unfruitful the *Works* is for those looking for facts, they are extremely fertile ground for those interested in how the DPRK wishes to present itself and its Great Leader. The scope and the content of the *Works* is much more extensive than compilations produced before and after it, essentially attempting to cover or collect Kim Il Sung's entire adult life. As the introductory note acknowledges, the *Works* does contain some essays previously published in other compilations, but it also contains some that had never before been published. Among those in the latter group are the essays I focus on in this thesis, the twenty essays that make up the guerrilla narrative and cover the time period from June 1930 through the autumn of 1943.

To date, I have not been able to find a scholar that has written about these first twenty essays in the context of the DPRK's fixation on Kim Il Sung's guerrilla experience. Scholars like Wada Haruki, who was the first to extensively examine the DPRK through the analytical lens of the guerrilla nation, and Adrian Buzo, who does much the same thing using English-language sources, have addressed that context.[18] However, no one has used the guerrilla narrative of the *Works* to examine the DPRK's

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[17] In *Kim Il Sung*, Suh examines the conflict between the generally accepted background of Kim Il Sung and the DPRK's version of that history, for example. As just one example of the discrepancies between these two accounts, much of the guerrilla narrative in the *Works* centers around activities undertaken by the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, or AJPGA—no outside evidence suggests such an army ever existed.

[18] See Wada Haruki, *Kin Nissei To Manshu Konichi Senso* (*Kim Il Sung and the Manchurian Anti-Japanese War*) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1992) and Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999). Additionally, Dae-Sook Suh touches on this theme in his biography of Kim Il Sung. See *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

narrative about Kim Il Sung's guerrilla experience, especially in the context of the time period the *Works* was published.

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Historical Context of the DPRK

Chosŏn, 1392–1910

The Chosŏn period provides the backdrop for and the standard against which all that would take place afterwards would be (and still is) measured. The social norms and customs that formed during this time are what we typically think of when we think of "traditional" Korean culture and history. It was also the last time an undivided Korea would be ruled by Koreans.

Unlike the Koryŏ period that preceded it, whose primary ideological influence was Buddhism, Chosŏn's social order was shaped much more by Confucianism.[19] The social order gradually morphed from the freer structure of the Koryŏ period into the highly stratified one Westerners observed when they came to the peninsula centuries later.[20] Chosŏn's social hierarchy was hereditary and centered on family lineage. In

[19] For a discussion of the Koryŏ period, see Seth's *A History of Korea*, p. 77–126 and Bruce Cumings, *Korea's Place in the Sun: A Modern History* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2005), p. 39–45.

[20] Cumings, *Korea's Place*, p. 48; see p. 46–64 for more on the social reforms of the Chosŏn period; see also Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992) for a book-length study of this process.

effect, this meant that Chosŏn had a rigid and impermeable caste system that did not allow for much social mobility, especially upward social mobility.[21] This highly stratified social system was the backdrop against which the DPRK's vitriolic rhetoric about feudalism would be set in later years. It also provided a stark contrast to the communist ideas that would make their way into the country after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917.

Despite its desire to remain aloof from the world outside, Chosŏn was swept up into the larger storm of regional and international events. And as with the Qing empire in China and the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan, contact with the West heralded a crisis for Chosŏn. By the end of the nineteenth century and into the beginning of the twentieth, Chosŏn was being shaken by internal and external forces. Various domestic factions were for and against modernization and all its attendant upheavals.[22] This crisis of domestic control set the stage for the next chapter in Korean history, the Japanese annexation and occupation.

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[21] See Seth, *History of Korea*, p. 165–172 for a discussion of the *yangban* upper-class and their domination of Chosŏn, as well as a discussion of those on the opposite end of the social scale, slaves and outcasts.

[22] See Cumings, *Korea's Place*, p. 107–120, 141–146. For a more thorough examination of the domestic upheaval during the late Chosŏn, see Seth, *History of Korea*, p. 189–263 (chapters 8 and 9), which deals with almost the entire nineteenth century and traces the series of events culminating in the eventual annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910; see also Andre Schmid, *Korea Between Empires, 1895–1919* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002) for a more limited and intellectually-focused history of the shift in Korean politics and thinking in the last years of Chosŏn and the first years of official colonization.

Annexation, Occupation, and Resistance, 1910–1945

The guerrilla narrative of the *Works*, which I examine in this paper, contains material purporting to cover events transpiring during the last half of this period, from 1930 to 1943. Both Kim Il Sung and the DPRK regime acquired their legitimacy in the resistance movement against the Japanese colonizers during this time. By gaining an understanding of this important period, we can begin to comprehend the foundation upon which all of the DPRK's rhetoric about itself and its Great Leader is constructed.

The Chinese, the Japanese, and the Russians all had interests in Chosŏn during its declining decades, but in 1910, the Japanese officially annexed Chosŏn as a colony after more than a decade of direct-but-unofficial involvement in both domestic and foreign affairs.[23] The newest citizens of the rapidly expanding Japanese empire were less than pleased with this development, and showed it. At one point soon after the official annexation, the Japanese estimated there were nearly 70,000 armed guerrillas on the peninsula.[24] Despite this impressive mobilization again the colonizers, the resistance movement was divided from the beginning between the communists and the nationalists over the question of how to go about it.[25] Still, by the 1920s the communists, mostly youth and students, led the Korean resistance movement.[26]

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[23] See Cumings, *Korea's Place*, p. 144 for an account of the events of official annexation.

[24] Cumings, *Korea's Place*, p. 146.

[25] Gi-wook Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism in Korea: Genealogy, Politics, and Legacy* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 77; see also Seth, *History of Korea*, p. 307.

[26] Robert A. Scalapino and Chong Lee, *Communism in Korea, Part I: The Movement* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1972). The first three chapters detail the origins, challenges, and history of communism in Korea during the Japanese occupation.

The center of Korean communism at this point was located in Seoul, then the capital city of an undivided Korea, in the southern half of the peninsula. Using the peninsula as a base, by the early 1930s, the Japanese had added part of northeast China to their growing empire and rechristened it Manchukuo. Some of the Korean resistance fighters banded together with Manchurian Korean and Chinese resistance fighters to fight the Japanese. Not all of these groups espoused communist ideology, though many of them did.[27] Only a few years later, some members of these groups would figure prominently in Korea's history, not the least of which was Kim Song-ju, better known to history as Kim Il Sung.[28]

The Japanese were no more willing to entertain resistance on the fringes of their empire than they were in the heart of it. By the early 1940s, the Japanese effort to stamp out this mixed bag of Chinese and Korean guerrillas, both nationalist and communist, proved generally successful. Most of the groups were either killed off or forced to flee to exile in the Soviet Union or further inland into China.[29]

The Founding of the DPRK and the Korean War

By the early 1940s, virtually all guerrilla activity in Manchuria and northern Korea had ceased, as the guerrillas fled farther into China or into the neighboring Soviet Union to escape the Japanese. Those who fled included Kim Il Sung, who spent several years in the Soviet Union, until the sudden end of World War II in 1945 brought about

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[27] See Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 12–29.

[28] Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 3–4, 10–11.

[29] Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 29; see p. 22–29 for the whole discussion.

the dismantling of the Japanese empire. It is at this point that the history of Korea as a divided nation begins.

Division and Transition, 1945–1948

Unfortunately for the Koreans who had been hoping for a return to sovereignty when the Japanese were defeated, the "independence" they gained by the Japanese surrender to the United States (US) bore very little resemblance to self-government.[30] Because of the sudden Japanese surrender at the beginning of August 1945, ending World War II in the Pacific, the US was caught off-guard in regards to the monumental task of dismantling the Japanese empire. In an effort to keep the Soviets—who had joined the war in the Pacific only a few days before its abrupt end—from gaining control of the entire peninsula, a hurried decision was made to divide the peninsula in half at an arbitrary line on the map at the 38th parallel. Just as in conquered Germany, the Soviets would administer half, and the Allies the other half. Eventually, after an appropriate time under "trusteeship," the plan was for the two halves to be rejoined and for the Koreans to govern themselves.[31]

Though the initial weeks of the Soviet occupation of Korea north of the 38th parallel were rocky, the Soviets had an easier time of it than the Americans had in the

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[30] Sheila Miyoshi Jager, *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013), p.16; see also Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 55–57, and Seth, *History of Korea*, p. 309.

[31] Oberdorfer, *Two Koreas*, p. 6; see also Armstrong, *Koreas*, p. 9, and Jager, *Brothers*, p. 18–19. Each offers basically the same information, but the interpretation of events and the amount of detail differs across each recounting.

south. In the north, the Korean citizens who had fled from the Japanese into the Soviet Union and the exiled Korean guerrillas proved a boon to the Soviets:

> While the occupation of northern Korea found the Soviets almost as unprepared and untrained for the task as the Americans were in the south, the available pool of . . . Soviet Korean citizens who were committed communists, spoke both Korean and Russian, and understood the political and cultural nuances of Korean society made the transition to Soviet-occupied northern Korea a fairly easy one.[32]

Working through these Soviet-Koreans, the Soviet Union was able to avoid the administrative challenges that plagued the US in the southern half of the peninsula.[33] Still, the Soviet Union needed a man with more ties to the native Korean populace to install as the leader in the area they controlled. That person was Kim Il Sung.[34] Contrary to the DPRK's claim that "President Kim II Sung returned triumphantly home [to Korea from exile in the Soviet Union] to an enthusiastic welcome from the people",[35] Kim was initially not well-received. Nevertheless, by the end of 1945, just a few months after the end of World War II, Kim Il Sung was firmly established as the political figurehead in the Soviet zone of control.[36]

In the midst of tumultuous events, the Republic of Korea officially came into being on 15 August 1948 in the territory controlled by the US. Not to be outdone, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was formally founded in the Soviet zone less

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[32] Jager, *Brothers*, p. 20.

[33] For a thorough and interesting discussion of the challenges the Americans faced in administering the nascent ROK, see Jager, *Brothers*, p. 27–35 and p. 36–54.

[34] See Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 59–73 for an in-depth look at how Kim was installed.

[35] "Founding of the DPRK" (http://www.korea-dpr.com/founding_dprk.html).

[36] See Cumings, *Korea's Place*, p. 195–196.

than a month later, on 9 September 1948, with Kim Il Sung as its leader.[37] Less than two years later, those two new nations would go to war over the right to be the one to govern a reunited Korea.

The "Fatherland Liberation War," 1950–53

The Korean War, as it is called in English, or the "Fatherland Liberation War" in the DPRK, began in the early hours of 25 June 1950.[38] It raged for three years and claimed millions of lives on both sides of the conflict.[39] Both Kim Il Sung in the North and Syngman Rhee in the South wanted a unified Korea—but each man wanted unification on his terms and the united Korea to be under his leadership.[40] Each man manipulated his superpower sponsor into helping fight the war, which, given the rising political tension between the US and the Soviet Union, was framed in terms of necessity for securing the advantage of said superpower on the global stage.

In the opening months of the war, DPRK forces pushed ROK and United Nations (UN) forces to the very southernmost tip of the peninsula, but a few months later were in turn pushed back to the Yalu River, which forms the northernmost border of Korea. After

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[37] Jager, *Brothers*, p. 51; Seth, *History of Korea*, p. 317.

[38] See Michael J. Varhola, *Fire & Ice: The Korean War, 1950–1953*, (Da Capo, 2000), p. 2; also Jager, p. 66–68; Cumings offers a different take in *Korea's Place*, p. 260–264.

[39] Cumings gives round totals of more than three million North Koreans (soldiers and civilians), one million South Koreans (also soldiers and civilians), another million Chinese (soldiers), and fifty-two thousand Americans (soldiers) in his book *North Korea: Another Country* (New York: The New Press, 2003). Casualties of UN countries are not cited, but Varhola cites UN casualties (killed, wounded, MIA, and POW) at 17,260 (*Fire & Ice*, p. 275–276). In contrast, Koh puts the total casualties from all involved at about four million, with three million of those being Koreans from both sides of the conflict ("War's Impact," p. 219).

[40] Cumings, *Korea's Place*, p. 235–236, 257–258.

a year of fighting, the battle lines stalled at approximately the 38th parallel. There they remained for the next two years, fighting and dying over gains and losses of hundreds of feet instead of miles.[41]

Since only an armistice was ever signed, the Korean War has never officially ended. The truce line delineated by the armistice was drawn roughly along the same line that was established at the end of World War II when the peninsula was split into separate zones of control.[42] The fighting, which ranged nearly the entire length and breadth of the peninsula and displaced millions of people, had crushed the fledgling economies of both the DPRK and ROK, killed millions of civilians and soldiers alike, and had not significantly changed the territorial holdings of either country. By almost any tangible measure, both Koreas lost the war—badly.[43]

Post-War Period to the 1970s, 1953–1970s

After the Korean War, despite the widespread devastation, the DPRK started the rebuilding process with an edge over the ROK. This was largely thanks to colonial-era Japanese investment, which had located most of the heavy industry in the north to

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[41] The first chapter (p. 1–31) in Varhola's *Fire & Ice* has a good (if US-skewed) annotated timeline of the war on the ground that covers the advances and retreats of each of the armies. Appendix 1 (p. 287–297) in the same book has a more bare-bones chronology of the events leading up to the war and the war itself.

[42] Oberdorfer, *Two Koreas*, p. 10 and Cumings, *Another Country*, p. 40; see also Jager, *Brothers*, p. 193–207, 266–286 for a detailed discussion of the armistice talks and their culmination in its signing.

[43] Koh, "War's Impact," p. 219–20; see also Balazs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953–1964* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2005), p. 43–45; also Cumings, *Another Country*, p. 15–31 and *Korea's Place*, p. 293–298 for accounts of both Koreas' losses.

facilitate their goal of expanding into China. The south was underdeveloped by the Japanese during the colonial period and remained largely agricultural until well after the Korean War—not a successful formula for prosperity in a period dominated by industrialization.[44]

However, the damage the war had done on both sides of the 38th parallel was significant, and recovering from that unaided would have taken both countries decades. Both the DPRK and the ROK relied on their respective allies to help rebuild after the war. Kim Il Sung went to Beijing and Moscow to ask Mao and Khrushchev for aid, and Syngman Rhee turned to the US for more and more aid money.[45] But still, by the 1960s, the DPRK seemed to have won the day in the battle of quality of life and economic success.

The DPRK was definitely no paradise, nor were its citizens prosperous. There were purges and the regime was repressive by Western standards.[46] But in general, the citizens of the DPRK were doing relatively better than their ROK counterparts. As Lankov put it:

> We should not forget that Kim Il Sung was imposing his system on a country whose population overwhelmingly consisted of the [children] of premodern subsistence farmers. … [His] system seemed to be better than what they had experienced before—being at the mercy of a feudal absolute monarchy and then a remarkably brutal colonial regime. … [E]ven at its lowest ebb the South Korean regime of Syngman Rhee was remarkably more permissive than its North Korean

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[44] Cumings, *Korea's Place*, p. 304–305, and Lankov, *Real North Korea*, p. 69; see also Szalontai, *Khrushchev Era*, p. 47–54 for more details on the "Stalinist investment" in the DPRK after the war.

[45] For a discussion of the international aid the DPRK received, see Szalontai, *Khrushchev Era*, p. 45–47 and p. 47–52 for more details. For a discussion of the international aid the ROK received, see Cumings, *Korea's Place*, p. 304–309.

[46] See Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 141–143 for examples.

> counterpart. Nonetheless, it was brutal—from available statistics, between the years of 1945 and 1955 the number of people massacred for political reasons was actually larger in the South than in the North.…The South Korean regime also had less equal distribution of wealth and to a large extent was dominated by former pro-Japanese collaborators. So until the late 1960s even a well-informed and unbiased observer would not have many reasons to see the South Korean system as vastly preferable to Kim Il Sung's [DPRK].[47]

The 1970s changed all that.

The 1970s were a decade of great change in the history of the DPRK, which culminated in the ascension of Kim Jong Il to the position of the official heir apparent in October 1980. It was the end of an era—the end of total direct control of the DPRK by Kim Il Sung, its founding father and beloved Great Leader. Transitions are often fraught with doubt and unease; they mark a change from the known and familiar to the unknown and unfamiliar. People need extra reassurance during transitional times to maintain confidence in the order of things, and to keep things moving forward strongly and smoothly.

By the late 1970s, the DPRK needed some reassurance. The 1970s marked the beginning of the end of business as usual in the DPRK. Economic decline hit them just as the economy of the ROK was booming. Rumor whispered that Kim Il Sung, the beloved and revered Great Leader and founder of the DPRK, was in failing health.[48] The Sino-Soviet split of the 1960s, which splintered international communist solidarity, continued to affect the DPRK's relationship with both China and the Soviet Union, as did US-

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[47] Lankov, *Real North Korea*, p. 63; see also p. 70.

[48] Oberdorfer, *Two Koreas*, p. 340. Dae-Sook Suh, in an article published in January 1979 said, "After thirty years of rule in the North, Kim [Il Sung] has begun to show signs of being a tired warrior." He goes on to explain that Kim Il Sung's output of writings and interviews dropped off considerably since the early 1970s, and that his on-the-spot guidance tours were now largely confined to Pyongyang and the surrounding area. "North Korea 1978: The Beginning of the Final Push" (*Asia Survey* 19, no 1 (1979): 51–57), p. 56.

Soviet detente and building US-Chinese rapprochement. Given the international political climate at the time—the Cold War, the war America was waging in Vietnam to contain communism, Park Chung-hee in the presidency in the ROK—the possibility that a breakdown of the status quo could lead to regime collapse could not be overlooked. To perpetuate the status quo and reinforce the legitimacy of the government, the state, and its political and economic choices, something needed to be done.

And something was done: the regime released a flood of propaganda reinforcing the personality cult of Kim Il Sung, of which his *Works* is a part. The legitimacy of the ruling regime of the DPRK is built upon the foundation of Kim Il Sung; the legitimacy of Kim Il Sung was built upon the foundation of the anti-Japanese guerrilla war during the colonial occupation of Korea. The guerrilla narrative reinforces both of these.

CHAPTER 2

THE LEADER

At forty-eight volumes and thousands of pages, the *Works* is by far the most comprehensive collection of writings and addresses attributed to Kim Il Sung. As I detailed in my introduction, I have restricted my examination of the *Works* to the first twenty essays of the first volume—the guerrilla narrative—which cover the years 1930 to 1943. There are a few noticeable gaps during that thirteen-year span where the *Works* is silent, however; there are no essays from 1934 or 1938, and there is only one essay between 1940 and the end of World War II in August 1945, dated September 1943.[49] During this time, Kim Il Sung was between the ages of eighteen and thirty-one. This is also roughly the same period during which he was engaged in fighting against the Japanese imperial army that was moving from Korea into Manchuria, in northeastern China.[50]

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[49] The remaining essays in the first volume are all dated from the last half of 1945, following the surrender of the Japanese at the end of World War II. They range in date from August 20, 1945 to December 29, 1945.

[50] During the first few years of this period, it is unlikely that Kim Il Sung was fighting with the resistance movement, contrary to the implied claim of the *Works* that he was engaged in guerrilla activities in 1930. Suh says that "it is conceivable that Kim began his guerrilla activities as early as 1932 when he was barely twenty years old." *Kim Il Sung*, p. 14.

The Persona of Kim Il Sung in the *Works*

In a country where the founder's portrait is "displayed ahead of the national flag and the national emblem" and "the song of the Marshal Kim Il Sung is played ahead of the national anthem,"[51] a collection of his addresses and writings surely has a stake in portraying him in a specific light. I argue that the purpose of the guerrilla narrative in the *Works* is to create a persona for Kim Il Sung, the persona of a leader above all others. Further, I argue that this persona the guerrilla narrative creates possesses attributes intended to address specific concerns arising from the greater context of the DPRK in late 1970s, the most important events of which is the impending announcement of his son Kim Jong Il as his successor. I take the framework for the analysis in this chapter from the introductory note written by The Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea, "On the Occasion of the Publication of Kim Il Sung's *Works*," which prefaces the first volume.[52]

The introduction outlines clearly what the reader is supposed to gain from this encounter, though it may be only a second-hand encounter, with the Great Leader. It wastes no time getting straight to the point; its opening line, standing apart as its own paragraph, reads: "Respected and beloved Comrade Kim Il Sung is a great thinker and theoretician."[53] The next paragraph continues: "The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung

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[51] Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 316.

[52] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i. Hereafter I will refer to this note as the introduction. ("《김일성저작집》 출판에 즈음하여" Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i).

[53] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i ("경애하는 김일성동지는 사상리론가이시다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i). All of the English quotations from the *Works* in this thesis are taken from the English edition published by the DPRK's Foreign Languages Publishing House.

started his revolutionary career in his early years, created the immortal Juche idea and, by applying this idea, has led our revolution along the straight road to victory."[54]

Thus from the first two lines of text in the whole volume, the reader knows exactly how he or she is supposed to understand Kim Il Sung. The agenda of the *Works* is laid out plainly, without question, so that even an idle reader who never makes it to the veritable ocean of text that comes after will immediately take away the message the *Works* is meant to convey. These themes are reinforced as the guerrilla narrative unfolds.

"Great Thinker and Theoretician"

The first of the themes is that Kim Il Sung is a "great thinker and theoretician," credited with "creat[ing] the immortal Juche idea."[55] After introducing the theme in its opening line, the introduction continues in the same vein:

> Comrade Kim Il Sung, the great thinker and theoretician, has evolved and enriched the Juche idea and the theories on the revolution and construction and brought about everlasting ideological and theoretical achievements in the grim but magnificent practical struggle for the revolution and construction. Through his tireless, energetic ideological and theoretical efforts, the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung has produced many a classic which will shine for ever in history. His [*Works*] … contain ideas and theories on politics, the economy, culture, military affairs and all other fields. They provide comprehensive answers to questions

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[54] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i ("위대한 수령 김일성동지께서는 일찌기 혁명의 길에 나서 시여 영생불멸의 주채사상을 창시하시고 그것을 구현하여 우리 혁명을 곧바른 승리의 길로 이끌어오시였다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i).

[55] In referring to the DPRK's philosophy, for ease of recognition I will follow the conventional spelling of the *Works*, capitalize it, and render it in regular text as Juche. When referring to the actual Korean word, I will keep the spelling used in the *Works* but render it in all-lowercase italics as *juche*.

> raised by the revolution and construction and brightly illuminate the path of the people.[56]

However, it is difficult to see the realization of the introduction's claims in the text of the guerrilla narrative itself. That the persona of Kim Il Sung makes frequent references to self-reliance and the idea that Koreans know Korea best seems to be the best evidence the guerilla narrative is able to muster in support of this theme.

The guerilla narrative, rather than demonstrating Kim Il Sung's philosophical prowess to the reader, instead informs the reader that he possess said prowess. While a citizen of the DPRK, already primed by the influence of other state-sponsored propaganda, may have accepted that fact as self-evident, without the introduction directly making that point, this aspect of the persona the guerrilla narrative is creating for Kim Il Sung would be overlooked by an international reader. There is no evidence of a unique philosophy, or even a unique approach to an old philosophy, to be found within the text of the guerrilla narrative. David-West gives the best explanation of the reason the person Kim Il Sung falls short of the claim the *Works* makes for his persona—namely that Juche is not a philosophy at all:

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[56] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i ("위대한 사상리론가이신 김일성동지께서는 혁명투쟁과 건설사업의 준엄하고 거창한 실천속에서 주체사상과 혁명과 건설에 관한 리론을 발전풍부화시키시었으며 풀멸의 사상리론 적업적을 쌓아올리시였다. 위대한 수령 김일성동지께서는 불면불휴의 정력절인 사상리론활동으로 력사에 길이 빛날 고전적로작을 수많이 집필하시었다. [김일성저작집은] 정치, 경제, 문화, 군사를 비롯한 모든 분야의 사상과 리론을 담고있다. 경애하는 수령 김일성동지의 로작들은 혁명과 건설이 제기하는 문제들에 전면적인 해답을 주고 있으며 인민들 이 나아갈 앞길을 휘황히 밝혀주고있다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i–ii). The translation of this passage in the English edition actually removes some of the repeated invocations of Kim Il Sung's name and title ("comrade" and "great leader") present in the Korean. To approximate the effect of these in the original, replace *his* with "the great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung's."

> Philosophy is a critical search for truth that investigates all pre-given reality and all pre-given conceptions in order to make sense of the world. That is something [Juche] ideology does not do, thus abandoning the social function and social role of philosophy. [Juche] in Kim's writings is not argued but asserted, composed of an elementary and recursive set of axioms, slogans, and syllogisms.[57]

Myers asserts that the "so-called Juche Thought"[58] was never meant to be a philosophy, but was something created to keep Kim Il Sung's personality cult in step with those of other leaders of communist countries. "Mao [Zedong]'s reputation as a thinker posed a greater problem to Kim [Il Sung]," he writes; Juche was meant to put Kim Il Sung on par with and ape the achievements of the leader of the People's Republic of China (PRC) located just over the DPRK's northern border.[59]

Perhaps to make up for the lack of evidence of a philosophy, references to themes that suggest a nascent Juche ideology are made constantly in some form throughout the guerrilla narrative. The word *juche* is never used in the guerrilla narrative, but broad hints of it are sprinkled liberally throughout the text. One of the first of these is in a report dated June 30, 1930: "Since our aim is to carry through none other than the Korean revolution," he says, "we should solve all problems arising in the course of that revolution by our own efforts, proceeding from the specific conditions in our country."[60] The word *juche* itself is absent in this sentence, but its core values of self-reliance and a Korea-centric mindset are clearly evident. Even as Kim Il Sung goes on to discuss the

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[57] David-West, "Between Confucianism," p. 105.

[58] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 11.

[59] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 44–45.

[60] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 4 ("우리는 바로 조선 혁명을 하는것만큼 우리 나라의 구체적인 현실로부터 출발하여 혁명에서 나서는 모든 문체를 자체의 힘으로 해결하여야 할것입니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 5).

need to incite in themselves and the people of the countryside a greater revolutionary and political fervor, these themes are repeated several times in the essay.

The frequency at which the persona of Kim Il Sung appeals to this nascent Juche idea varies across the essays of the guerrilla narrative, but at least one mention is made in almost all the essays. Though it is not yet mentioned by name, the reader is meant to grasp that "the immortal Juche idea" was a guiding principle of the Korean anti-Japanese revolution from the very beginning—and since it proved such an effective tool to the revolution in the past, it should be implemented in the present.

A Young Genius

The second major theme of the opening sentences of the introduction is its most subtle one. In fact, it is only mentioned explicitly once: "The great leader Comrade Kim Il Sung started his revolutionary career in his early years[.]"[61] The real impact of this is only felt if the reader is acquainted with Kim Il Sung's vital statistics. Kim Il Sung was born in April 1912.[62] In October 1945, when the Soviets made Kim Il Sung the leader of their area of control, he was thirty-three years old. That means that in June of 1930, when the first address in the *Works* was supposedly delivered, Kim Il Sung would have been just eighteen years old. Two years later, when giving the address to commemorate the founding of the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army, Kim Il Sung would have been

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[61] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i ("위대한 수령 김일성동지께서는 일찌기 혁명의 길에 나서 시여" Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i).

[62] Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 3.

barely (by ten days) twenty years old.[63] Likewise, everything contained in the first volume of the *Works* purportedly took place when Kim Il Sung was between the ages of eighteen and thirty-three. The introductory note written by the publisher claims that the first volume of the *Works*

> gives a comprehensive clarification of the idea and theory of the Juche-oriented anti-imperialist, anti-feudal democratic revolution. In other words, it gives a scientific definition of the character, objectives, motive forces and targets of the Korean revolution, based on a concrete analysis of the socio-economic conditions and class relationship in our country.[64]

It is never explicitly stated that Kim Il Sung was the person in charge while these events transpired, but the reader is definitely meant to understand that he is. Perhaps rather than making this implication at all, the guerrilla narrative understands that the reader assumes this already. Could such a demonstrably capable leader—whose superior abilities even as a young man are being showcased in the guerrilla narrative—be anything but the leader? His grasp of "politics, the economy, culture, military affairs and all other fields"[65] is all the more impressive because of his extreme youth. It is interesting to note, however, that despite the stated thirteen-year span between the first essay and the twentieth, the tone and style of the guerrilla narrative does not change with his growing experience and maturity. Obviously this can be explained by outsiders as a consequence of the fact that these were not actually written or delivered when the *Works* asserts they

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[63] No such army of Koreans ever existed. See Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 12–13.

[64] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. iii. There is no Korean counterpart to this note; it is only found in the English version. There are also notes preceding the English editions of the succeeding volumes, as well.

[65] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i ("정치, 경제, 문화, 군사를 비롯한 모든 분야의 사상과 리론" Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i).

were. That explanation, however, would never be appropriate for the DPRK audience; perhaps this very consistency could be used by the regime as evidence that Kim Il Sung was already mature as a leader even at that young age, and that his abilities were inborn traits so remarkable that they manifested from a very young age.

That Kim Il Sung's "revolutionary career" as a guerrilla began so early is intended to convey several ideas to the reader. First, that Kim Il Sung was involved with fighting against the Japanese and for Korea from a very young age, and for a long time—at least the fifteen years covered in this volume. The longer one does something and the younger one is when one begins, the more experienced and equipped one is to handle its pressures and responsibilities. Second, the narrative implies heavily that in order to be such a great leader at such a young age, he was a prodigy. Lastly, the narrative intimates that, as a natural consequence of the first two points, Kim Il Sung is better and more fitted to be a leader than others who might attempt to lead. Therefore, the people should trust his experience and manifest ability to lead them safely through whatever hard times the DPRK might face.

Revolutionary and Leader

The remaining theme from the first two sentences in the *Works* is that of Kim Il Sung as a revolutionary and leader—and a victorious one. This aspect of *victorious* leadership is important. In the words of the introduction, he "led our revolution along the straight road to victory."[66] The paragraph below those lines elaborates on that theme:

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[66] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i ("우리 혁명을 곧바른 승리의 길로 이끌어오시였다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i).

> In the dark years of colonial rule by Japanese imperialism the great revolutionary leader Comrade Kim Il Sung … organized and led the heroic anti-Japanese armed struggle and achieved the historic cause of national liberation. … He has thus turned our poor and backward country into a rich, strong and developed socialist country.[67]

The implication of the paragraph is that without him, the anti-Japanese revolution might have floundered and never achieved "the historic cause of national liberation."

The *Works* never directly mentions anything about Kim Il Sung; it is told in his "voice," and he does not talk about himself. A consequence of this is that all the action of the revolution happens "off screen"—the reader never sees Kim Il Sung's leadership in action during the guerrillas' clashes with the imperial Japanese army. Thus, the reader of the guerrilla narrative learns about Kim Il Sung's august and brilliant leadership in two ways: first, by generic mention of what the leaders of the revolution should be doing (and by implication what Kim Il Sung is doing), and second, by what his leadership is *not* in contrast to the leaders of imperialists, corrupt revolutionaries, and feudal societies.

This passage from "The Path of the Korean Revolution" demonstrates both:

> [T]he leaders of the movement must go among the masses and awaken them so that they themselves wage the revolutionary struggle as masters. But the self-styled leaders of the communist movement merely indulged in a war of words harmful to the revolution, and gave no thought to awakening the masses and mobilizing them for the revolutionary struggle. … The so-called "leaders" of our people's anti-Japanese national-liberation movement not only failed to mobilize the masses for revolutionary struggle but, being infected with flunkeyism towards great powers, brought serious harm to our revolution.[68]

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[67] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i ("혁면의 위대하신 수령이신 김일성동지께서는 … 영웅적인 항일무장투쟁을 조직령도하시여 조국광복의 역사적 위업을 이룩하시였[다.] 가난하고 뒤떨어졌던 우리 나라를 부강하고 발전된 사회주의 나라로 전변시키셨다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i).

[68] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 4 ("운동지다자들을 응당 인민대중속에 들어가 그들을 각성시킴으로써 대중자신이 주인이 되여 혁명투쟁을 전개하도록 하여야 합니다. 그런데

From this passage, the reader learns both what a true leader (i.e., Kim Il Sung) does, and what a true leader does *not*. On the one hand, a true leader should "go among the masses" and "awaken" them to their revolutionary and patriotic duty. It is the people's struggle, but a leader is supposed to teach them how to go about it; without him, they will remain unawakened and unaware of their duty to themselves and their country. On the other hand, a true leader (one might dare say a great leader) would never allow his revolutionary spirit to stop at a mere "war of words"; he is actively involved in the armed struggle, a fighter, a guerrilla.

The terms *flunkeys* and *flunkeyism* are used with relish throughout the guerilla narrative as strong condemnation for corrupt communist and revolutionary guerrilla leaders, imperialists, capitalists, and feudalists alike.[69] In the space of about two pages in one essay, Kim Il Sung used some form of the word *flunky* five times to refer to the organizers of the May 30 Uprising, decrying them as traitors to the revolution.[70] A pungent example of this is in "The Korean Revolutionaries Must Know Korea Well."[71] It is dated September 15, 1943, and it is the last chapter dated previous to the end of World

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공산주의운동을 한다는 상층지도자들은 혁명에 아무린 도움도 줄수 없는 말싸움만 하면서 인민대중을 각성시켜 혁명투쟁에 조직동원할데 대해서는 생각조차 하지 않았습니다. . . . 우리 인민의 반일민족해방운동을《지도》한다고 자처한 사람들은 사대구의사상에 물젖어 우리 혁명에 엄중한 손실을 가져다주었습니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 5).

[69] 사대주의사상 (*satae chuŭi sasang*) This word is more commonly translated into English as *toadyism* or *sycophantry*, but the guerrilla narrative uses *flunkeyism* for every appearance of this word in its text.

[70] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 12–14.

[71] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 202 ("《조선혁명가들은 조선을 알아야 한다》" Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 223).

War II and the dismantling of the Japanese empire, marking the end to the "revolutionary struggle" and guerrilla warfare against the Japanese in Manchuria and Korea. Speaking about the rulers of Chosŏn-period Korea, he says:

> [T]he feudal rulers did not try to reject the foreign forces …. Instead, they acted as flunkeys to the great powers and indulged in factional strife, fawning upon foreign forces and backed by them, and ended by committing the never-to-be-pardoned treachery of selling the country over to the Japanese imperialist aggressors.[72]

From these passages, and many others not cited here, the reader begins to paint a picture of Kim Il Sung as the guerrilla narrative wants him to be seen: unselfish, going among the people, uncorrupted by flunkeyism, proud of Korean history and heritage, and dutiful.

The Persona of Kim Il Sung in the *Works* as a Legitimizing Force for the Real Kim Il Sung in 1979–1981

From the vantage of the twenty-first century looking back, we can see that difficult times lay ahead of the DPRK in the early 1980s. Kim Il Sung and his policymakers did not have that advantage, however; all they could see were the simultaneous threats of the rising prosperity of the ROK, the ebbing tide of prosperity in their own country, and a potential succession crisis. All of these things challenged the delicate status quo that existed in the DPRK.

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[72] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 208–209 ("봉건통치배들은 외세를 배격하고 자체의 힘을 길러서 나라를 보전하려고 할 대신에 제가끔 외세에 아부굴종하면서 외국세력을 등에 업고 사대주의와 당쟁을 일삼다가 마침내 일제침략자들에게 조국을 팔아먹는 천추에 용서못할 매국배족행위를 감행하였습니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 231).

A whole new generation was coming of age in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Unlike their parents and grandparents, they did not remember the Japanese colonial occupation; they did not remember the valiant Comrade Kim Il Sung taking the reins of leadership after the Japanese were defeated. They were not present when the nation was founded; most were not even born yet when the "Fatherland Liberation War" was being fought, and the ones that were there were very young, possibly too young to remember how Comrade Kim Il Sung's brilliant leadership defeated the evil imperialist Americans and their deluded ROK allies. They needed to be reminded of the glorious origins of their leader and their county, and of how lucky they were to live under one and in the other.

Another factor was the economy. For the first time since Korea was divided, the DPRK was losing the quality-of-life battle with the ROK. The forward motion and relatively bright future of the early- and mid-1960's DPRK turned to a slow slide backwards, just as the ROK was in ascendancy. Two major factors contributed to the flip-flop of the economic fortunes of the DPRK and the ROK. The first was ROK president Park Chung-hee's almost single-minded focus on building South Korea's industry. This resulted in the staggering rate of growth, unparalleled in history, of the ROK economy between the late 1960s and 1980. Park's primary concern was building up the ROK's economy. To do this, he mobilized the entire nation, recruiting them in a patriotic push for prosperity. By 1980, the ROK catapulted to the position of "the most advanced nation of all continental Asia,"[73] surpassing the DPRK in per capita GDP in the mid-1970s for the first time since the end of World War II and the separation of the peninsula into two

[73] Lankov, *Real North Korea*, p. 70.

zones.[74] With that position came all the attendant benefits: more money, more stuff, and more evidence of both for the world to see—including the citizens of the DPRK.

The second factor in the economic reversal of fortunes was the gradual stagnation and collapse of the DPRK economy, which emphasized heavy industry over the development of infrastructure. At the same time Park Chung-hee was pouring money and resources into creating a self-sufficient economy, the DPRK's economy was in a slow, moribund spiral downwards. From the beginning, it was dependent on Chinese and Soviet aid to keep it running; Kim Il Sung proved just as adept as his ROK counterparts at utilizing prophecies of doom and imminent American invasion if he did not receive it. Both countries invested heavily in the DPRK, though the regime did its best to downplay the amount of aid they were receiving, at some points barely acknowledging it all.[75] The DPRK's economic philosophy had a few domestic quirks, as well. The most prominent of these was "the immortal Juche idea." The logical extreme of this philosophy is that everything from individual factories to the state itself should produce everything it could possibly need—hardly a sustainable economic policy in the climate of rapid globalization in the latter part of the twentieth century.[76]

The persona of Kim Il Sung created in the guerrilla narrative steers the reader away from focusing on the places where Kim Il Sung and his regime faltered. Instead, it

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[74] Oberdorfer, *Two Koreas*, p. 98.

[75] Lankov, *Real North Korea*, p. 73.

[76] Lankov, *Real North Korea*, p. 72. Also, Cumings relates an anecdote in *North Korea: Another Country* on this point: "In an interview in 1978, Kim Il Sung told a delegation of the Japan Socialist Party that in the late 1960s some Korean scientists wanted to start up another petrochemical factory for refining petroleum. . . . However, Kim said, '[O]ur country does not produce oil,' and the United States influenced the world oil regime; therefore, 'we are not yet in a position to depend on imports . . . [to do so] means allowing a stranglehold on our jugular.'" p. 57

focuses on reinforcing to the reader the things that made Kim Il Sung a leader in the first place: on his revolutionary, anti-Japanese, anti-imperialist, pro-Korean credentials. Kim Il Sung exhorts the people to remember the glorious past of the Korean people, the natural riches and beauty of the Korean land, and that

> the ultimate goal of our revolution is to make our country rich and mighty so that our people will lead a full and happy life. In other words, it is to build a paradise of socialism and communism in our country. Who builds this paradise? We must do it by ourselves.[77]

How the Guerrilla Narrative Bolsters Kim Jong Il's Claim to the Mantle of Leadership of the DPRK

One of the claims of this thesis is that the *Works*, and specifically the guerrilla narrative, is meant to bolster Kim Jong Il's claim to the mantle of leadership of the DPRK by reinforcing the legitimacy of his father. But the question presents itself: By lionizing the father, does not the son pale in comparison? Certainly, no mention or even allusion is made to Kim Jong Il in the guerrilla narrative presented in the *Works*. However, Kim Jong Il was born during this period, in February 1942 while his parents lived in exile in the Soviet Union.[78] In the years following the publication of the *Works*, as the propaganda machine began to craft Kim Jong Il's cult of personality, he would be inserted into the DPRK mythos of the guerrilla period; his birthplace was relocated to a

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[77] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 212 ("우리가 혁명을 하는 최종목적은 조국을 부강하게 건설하고 인민들을 유족하가 행복하게 살게 하려는것입니다. 다시 말하면 우리 나라에 사회주의, 공산주의 락원을 건설하려는것입니다. 사회주의, 공산주의 란원을 누가 건설합니까? 구것도 오리들자신이 건설하여야 합니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 234).

[78] Buzo, *Guerilla Dynasty*, p. 85.

more appropriately patriotic and symbolic secret guerrilla base on the slopes of Mt. Paektu, just inside the northern border of the DPRK.[79]

Kim Jong Il's legitimacy is dependent on his father's not because he is *like* his father, but because he is the only person qualified to interpret Kim Il Sung's greatness. In the words of Myers, "[T]he hereditary succession derives its legitimacy in no small part from the claim that [Kim Jong Il] imbibed Juche from the source."[80] Buzo agrees: Kim Jong Il was "the definitive interpreter of his father's ideology. . . . [A]lthough he belonged to a younger generation, he was not the product of any specific generation, but would serve as a model for all generations in his absorption of the revolutionary spirit of the Manchurian guerillas."[81]

By lionizing Kim Il Sung, the guerrilla narrative of the *Works* does cast a shadow across Kim Jong Il, beyond which he could never hope to grow. But Kim Jong Il's role as heir is less about filling his father's shoes as it is about memorializing them:

> The justification for the Kim Jong Il succession centred on the need for a 'model revolutionary' to consolidate his father's ideological system. … [T]he younger Kim emerged not as an embodiment of a new generation...but as an agent of the old revolutionary [guerrilla] generation of his father. From the beginning, the role of Kim Jong Il was to perpetuate the ideology of the revolutionary [guerrilla] generation and to forestall any attempts at revisionism by subsequent generations.[82]

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[79] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 115. Interestingly, his birth falls during the three-year period when the *Works* and the guerrilla narrative are curiously silent on the sayings and doings of the Great Leader Kim Il Sung.

[80] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 109.

[81] Buzo, *Guerilla Dynasty*, p. 105–106.

[82] Buzo, *Guerilla Dynasty*, p. 88.

The guerrilla narrative of the *Works* presents the canonical account of this most important period of DPRK history. It instructs its readers about both how they are supposed to understand their founding father and Great Leader, as well as who they should aspire to become (which will be examined in the next chapter). Kim Jong Il's role as his father's heir is not to enlarge his father's legacy, but to remind the people who their Leader is and who they should be. By virtue of his unique access to and relationship with Kim Il Sung, he is the person best suited to interpret and comment upon that legacy for the rest of the nation.

CHAPTER 3

THE PEOPLE

If the introduction to the *Works* is wholly concerned with establishing for the reader a correct understanding of Kim Il Sung, the text of the guerrilla narrative—ostensibly the writings and speeches of Kim Il Sung as a young man—is largely concerned with establishing a model of the ideal DPRK citizenry. In any nation there is the ruler, and there are the people. A ruler is ultimately only a single person, no less and no more human than his subjects. The people, their obedience and service, are the source of the ruler's power. Without the people, there are no armies with which to protect the ruler's territory and person, no architects to build monuments in his honor, no artisans to craft beautiful things to adorn him. There is no leader where there are no followers, no ruler where there are none to be ruled; no ideal revolutionary leader is a leader at all without an ideal revolutionary people.

A Guerrilla Nation

The essays that comprise the guerrilla narrative were ostensibly written or delivered during the time Kim Il Sung fought against the Japanese imperial army in Manchuria, and thus are uniquely suited to the purpose of creating an aspirational model citizenry for the people of the DPRK to emulate. The value of the guerrilla narrative for

this task lies in the tremendous emphasis the DPRK places on the activities of Kim Il Sung during this period. As Suh Dae-Sook put it in his biography of the country's leader, Kim Il Sung's DPRK biographers have attempted

> to build an image of Kim as a model revolutionary who led the Korean Communist revolution and succeeded in building a viable Communist state in Korea. North Korean historians and party officials are serious in their effort to trace the tradition of Korean communism to Kim and his guerrilla forces. His birthplace has become a sacred ground of the Korean revolution, and his family has become a source of inspiration for modern Korea. Even the founding of the present Korean People's Army on February 8, 1948, was backdated [just a year before the publication of the *Works*] to coincide with the alleged founding of Kim's first partisan force on April 25, 1932.[83] Kim is proud of his statues, monuments, and slogans of the "glorious tradition" of his guerrilla activities.[84]

I would argue with just one point in Suh's depiction of the situation. He characterizes the Korean revolution and the DPRK as communist—understandable given the time his book was published. However, I agree with Myers's more recent assertion that Western scholarship and the public alike have "mischaracteriz[ed]" the DPRK as communist, and that "race-based nationalism has...guided the DPRK in its policy-making from the start."[85]

The guerrilla narrative clothes Kim Il Sung's accomplishments fighting the Japanese in the language of communism, but this is merely window-dressing. By far the most important take-away is the emphasis on the success of the revolution due to the

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[83] See Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, "On the Occasion of Founding the Anti-Japanese People's Guerrilla Army," p. 44–52 for the speech the *Works* claims Kim Il Sung delivered at this event in 1932.

[84] Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, p. 2. Suh's biography of Kim Il Sung was published less than a decade after the publication of the *Works*, in 1988.

[85] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 8–11. Myers's book on DPRK ideology and propaganda was published initially in 2009, and reprinted in paperback in 2011.

nature of its revolutionary leader, and the devotion of its people to that revolution and its leader. This is a theme that permeates every page of the guerrilla narrative. An illustration of this is in "On Waging Armed Struggle Against Japanese Imperialism," in the section titled "On Laying the Mass Foundation for the Armed Struggle." Kim Il Sung, speaking to a "meeting of Party and Young Communist League Cadres" in 1931 (at age 19) says:

> In order to lay a firm mass foundation for the armed struggle it is of great importance to get the majority of the people from all walks of life to join…various revolutionary organizations, and strengthen their revolutionary education. To do this educational work well, we must first arm ourselves firmly with the revolutionary ideas of the working class and adopt the revolutionary work attitude of relying on the masses.[86]

There are several communist buzzwords in this passage and all throughout the guerrilla narrative, giving communism a lip service that thinly veils the actual nationalist, anti-imperialist agenda.

Devotion to nation and leader was a particularly important theme for the Kim Il Sung regime to emphasize through the guerrilla narrative at the end of the 1970s when the *Works* was published. In many ways, Kim Il Sung and his regime considered that "revolutionary struggle" still unfinished. In their eyes, the DPRK is *a* nation—a "rich, strong and developed" one—but it is not yet the entire Korean nation; the battle with imperialism and colonizers is incomplete.[87] From this perspective, the whole of the

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[86] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 35 ("무장투쟁의 대중적지반을 튼튼히 다지기 위하여서는 각계각층의 광범한 … 혁명호제회 등 각종 혁명조직들에 망라시켜 그들에 대한 혁명적 교양사업을 강화하는것이 매우 중요합니다. 대중에 대한 혁명적교양사업을 잘 진행하자면 먼저 우리들자신이 로동계급의 혁명사상으로 튼튼히 무장하여야 하며 대중에 의거하여 사업하는 혁명적사업태도를 확립하여야 합니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 40).

[87] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i ("부강하고 발전된" Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. i).

DPRK in the late 1970s is one of Kim Il Sung's much-lauded "guerrilla zones" writ large, its citizens guerrillas engaged in an on-going revolution.[88] The guerrilla narrative hints broadly at that point, creating a model of an ideal guerrilla-citizenship from the mouth of a younger Kim Il Sung, and to the need for the present citizens of the DPRK to continue hewing to the revolutionary values and practices of their heritage. This model ultimately directs the reader toward supporting the country's military build-up happening at the expense of quality of life, and glorifying military service as the highest expression of loyalty and patriotism, two of the most fundamental characteristics a model revolutionary should possess.

This framework for understanding the DPRK as a "guerilla dynasty" builds on the foundation of work by Wada Haruki and Adrian Buzo. Japanese scholar Wada Haruki was the first to extensively explore the idea in his 1992 book *Kin Nissei to Manshu Konichi Senso* (*Kim Il Sung and the Manchurian Anti-Japanese War*), though his focus is primarily on piecing together the history of Kim Il Sung's actual activities during the guerrilla period using Japanese, Russian, and Chinese sources. The term *guerrilla dynasty* itself is borrowed from Adrian Buzo's book of the same name, in which he comes to a similar conclusion as Wada Haruki but through different means, by pulling together an impressive amount of English-language sources.[89]

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[88] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 31. Kim refers to these guerrilla zones as "bases in the form of liberated areas" that are "completely beyond the enemy's ruling system."

[89] Wada Haruki, *Kin Nissei To Manshu Konichi Senso* (*Kim Il Sung and the Manchurian Anti-Japanese War*) (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1992); Adrian Buzo, *The Guerilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1999).

The publication of the *Works* in the late 1970s is hardly the first time Kim Il Sung and his regime utilized this framework. Buzo traces the beginning of this practice back to the 1950s:

> In the course of [consolidating his power and eliminating rivals], for the first time Kim [Il Sung] began to emphasize nationalism as a means of rallying the population to the enormous sacrifices needed for postwar recovery. This was a nationalism that first took shape in the environment of the anti-Japanese guerilla movement and developed into a creed through the destruction [of dissenting groups]. … DPRK nationalism drew inspiration from the Spartan outlook of the former Manchurian guerillas. … [It] stressed the 'purity' of all things Korean against the 'contamination' of foreign ideas[.] … Above all, DPRK nationalism stressed that the guerilla ethos was not only the supreme, but also the only legitimate basis on which to reconstitute a reunified Korea."[90]

Not only does the guerrilla narrative of the *Works* emphasize nationalism "as a means of rallying the population" to sacrifice, but it also constructs the epitome of a revolutionary leader (see the previous chapter) to in turn have him create an aspirational model of a revolutionary citizenry for the people to emulate. I argue further that the purpose of this model is to justify the current (at the time of the publication of the *Works*) regime emphasis on building up the military and to glorify military service as the highest expression of the citizens' loyalty and patriotism.

The persona of Kim Il Sung the guerrilla narrative creates is not shy about making authoritative declarations about how the guerrillas should conduct the revolution, and themselves. These range from common-sense pronouncements to exhortations; the nature of these declarations is about evenly divided between the two. Whatever their specific topic, the majority of Kim Il Sung's remarks of this kind fall into three categories: loyalty, patriotism, and self-sacrifice. As he establishes the necessity for these three

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[90] Buzo, *Guerilla Dynasty*, p. 27.

values in revolutionaries, he also not-so-subtly hints at the ultimate expression of these values: supporting and serving in the "armed struggle" of the revolutionary forces as they seek to overthrow the imperialist forces occupying Korea.

Filial Piety and Loyalty

Kim Il Sung and his regime were not starting from scratch with this attempt to focus the loyalty of the people upon the nation and its leader. The concepts and practice of filial piety and loyalty—"viewed as an extended form of filial piety"—were deeply ingrained in the minds of the Korean people long before the DPRK.[91] Some scholars have found a direct correlation between the neo-Confucian practices of the Chosŏn period and the cult of personality around Kim Il Sung, particularly as Kim Il Sung is frequently referred to as the Parent Leader.[92] Myers discounts this idea rather contemptuously, saying that whereas the Confucian tradition venerates male ancestors, in contrast the Kim Il Sung cult of personality casts him as a maternal figure.[93] "In order to prove a Confucian influence on the DPRK's personality cult," he says, "one would have to demonstrate that there is something *distinctly* Confucian about it, a task doomed to failure."[94]

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[91] Kang, "Political Uses," p. 66. *Filial piety* and *loyalty* are 충효 (*ch'unghyo*) and 충성 (*ch'ungsŏng*), respectively.

[92] For example, Selig Harrison, Thomas Hosuck Kang, and Bruce Cumings see Kim Il Sung's role in the DPRK as that of a traditional Confucian patriarch. See footnote 96 below.

[93] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 95–112, see especially 107–08.

[94] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 96, emphasis in original.

While Myers makes a compelling argument to support his analysis, I cannot agree with him that there is nothing "distinctly Confucian" about Kim Il Sung's personality cult. Like Jin Woong Kang, for example, I do see a Confucian influence on the DPRK and Kim Il Sung's personality cult. Filial piety and loyalty lay at the heart of the neo-Confucian tradition of the Chosŏn period that directly preceded the Japanese occupation of Korea. By the time the Japanese occupied the peninsula, the Korean people were already accustomed to an emphasis on the good of society over the good of the individual, as well as to a worldview where the virtue of a ruler greatly influenced that of the people.[95]

Indeed, one could argue that, by the time Kim Il Sung's personality cult was being created, neo-Confucianism already viewed loyalty to a political leader as an integral part of the Korean worldview.[96] However, according to Kang, it was the Japanese who first redirected the loyalty owed to one's ancestors in the Confucian tradition toward the head of state to accomplish their own ends, essentially equating filial piety and loyalty with patriotism. After the end of World War II, the dismantling of the Japanese empire, and the division of the Korean peninsula into North and South, the "Japanese transformation of Confucian thought would become incorporated into North Korea's communist ruling mechanism; the state-household nexus superseded the traditional clan system which North Korea condemned as a form of counter-socialist feudal Confucianism."[97] Myers agrees with Kang that the DPRK's ethnonationalism and Kim Il Sung's personality cult

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[95] Deuchler, *Confucian Transformation*, p. 110.

[96] Deuchler, *Confucian Transformation*, p. 108–11.

[97] Kang, "Political Uses," p. 66.

owe much to the Japanese, but adds that part of the campaign to patriotize the Korean people also involved rhetoric about the Korean and Japanese people being a pure, superior race.[98] After the Japanese left, the DPRK continued utilizing this 'pure race' rhetoric: "Having been ushered by the Japanese into the world's purest race, the Koreans in 1945 simply kicked the Japanese out of it."[99]

Refocusing the loyalty of the people into patriotism was a simple and subtle process. The Japanese and later the DPRK forbore from wresting the family completely away from the concepts of filial piety and loyalty and substituting the nation in its place; such an obvious subversion would have been more likely to meet with resistance and hostility. Instead, they redefined what *family* meant: they expanded it beyond the concept of family during the Chosŏn period that encompassed larger clans consisting of groups of related nuclear families to include the whole nation.[100]

As mentioned earlier, by the early twentieth century, the habit of putting family before the individual was already well-ingrained in the Korean consciousness. The Japanese began the redefinition of the family to tap into that social habit, defining it in a broader, ethnic and national sense instead of the narrower kinship definition of the Chosŏn period. Upon the dissolution of the Japanese empire, the DPRK continued that redefinition in its own way, attacking the patrilineal, clan-based Chosŏn society specifically as "feudal" (one of the strongest epithets that could be leveled at something

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[98] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 26–28; see also "Ideology as Smokescreen," p. 269.

[99] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 33–34.

[100] Shin, *Ethnic Nationalism*, p. 85.

during that period in the DPRK) while utilizing aspects of that "feudal" practice for its own benefit.[101]

Patriotism

Thus, most of the groundwork for redirecting values of the Chosŏn period toward the DPRK's ethnonationalism and Kim Il Sung's cult of personality was done by the Japanese during the thirty years they controlled the Korean peninsula. The hard part, so to speak—the initial steps in the direction toward patriotism as the highest expression of loyalty and filial piety—was already accomplished. Filial piety and loyalty were redirected in the minds of the people away from the family and clan and toward the nation and its leader—in other words, patriotism. However, the genius of the DPRK's approach to this is that the concept of *family* does not disappear; it broadens to include the whole nation. The head of state becomes the head of a vast family—the Parent Leader—to whom one's loyalty and filial piety is due.[102] As the definition of *family* in the minds of the people becomes synonymous with *state*, the individual's conception of his or her primary identity also changes. From identifying first as a *mother*, *father*, *daughter*, or *son* each citizen becomes above all a *patriot*, a member of the state family.[103]

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[101] Kang, "Political Uses," p. 69–71.

[102] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 107. 어버이 수령 (*ŏbŏi suryŏng*) is the Korean for the English title Parent Leader. This is one of Kim Il Sung's most commonly-used titles in the DPRK. Most scholars, like Cumings and Kang, see Kim Il Sung as the Parent Leader in the role of a traditional Confucian patriarch. Myers argues that the portrayal of Kim Il Sung in DPRK propaganda paints him as more of a maternal figure, which is one of the reasons he does not see a distinctly Confucian influence on the DPRK. See *Cleanest Race*, p. 48–51 and 107–08 for his argument of that point.

[103] I was not able to find any scholarship on the topic, but the use of the title *comrade* to refer to everyone from the lowliest citizen all the way to Kim Il Sung himself could also have

The use of *loyalty* in the guerrilla narrative demonstrates this. All mentions of loyalty, explicit and implicit, are surrounded by the context of the revolution and armed struggle. An example from the guerrilla narrative illustrates this: "A high degree of revolutionary determination and infinite loyalty to the revolution are the source of the strength of the people's guerrilla army and a decisive guarantee of its triumph over Japanese imperialism."[104] Nor does the patriotism of the DPRK demand only the loyalty and devotion of its people; it also requires their love. True patriots, Kim Il Sung says, "love the homeland and the people more ardently than anybody else" and have "the ardent spirit of loving and valuing the country and nation more than anyone else."[105] The

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contributed to this, albeit perhaps not on purpose. The title *comrade* was and still is a ubiquitous symbol of communism, but its use in the DPRK might have had the unintended consequence of helping to reinforce the gradual equation of family and state. The Korean language, like other Asian languages such as Chinese and Japanese, uses family titles as titles of respectful address; replacing those with *comrade* could have unintentionally contributed to the process Kang describes.

[104] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 48 ("높은 혁명적각오, 혁명에 대한 무한한 충실성 (*ch'ungsilsŏng*)은 인민유격대가 일제를 타승하고 승리를 쟁취할수 있는 힘의 원천이며 결정적담보입니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 53) The word translated here as *loyalty* is 충실성 (*ch'ungsilsŏng*).

[105] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 211 ("조국과 인민을 누구보다도 열렬히 사랑하는 우리..." and "조국과 민족을 사랑하고 귀중히 여기는 애국심 (*aeguksim*)이 남보다 강[합니다]." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 232–33) The phrase translated here as "ardent spirit" is 애국심 (*aeguksim*) in the original Korean. 애국심 (*aeguksim*) is *patriotism*, so essentially, the idea of loving the country is repeated twice in this one phrase, since "love the country and the people" is already explicitly stated. The Korean word for *patriot* is 애국자 (*aegukja*). 애국자 (*aegukja*) is a Sino-Korean word, meaning each syllable of the Korean word has a corresponding Chinese character from which the Korean word takes its meaning. The characters for 애국자 (*aegukja*) are 愛國者—literally, *love country person*. The Korean word has love of country built into the etymology and literal meaning of the word, only one level removed from the word in daily use by the Korean people. The English *patriot*, in contrast, comes from the French *patriote*, via the late Latin *patriota* meaning 'fellow countryman,' from Greek *patriōtēs*, from *patrios* 'of one's fathers,' from *patris* 'fatherland' (*New Oxford American Dictionary*, "patriot"). It is unlikely that the

unsaid "and more than anything else" resonates as he further exhorts the people to learn more about their (appropriate, non-feudal) history and the singular and important contributions Koreans have made to the world. Kim Il Sung makes it clear that the people are fighting for their nation and (it is implied) their leader. Loyalty and patriotism have become one and the same.

Of course, patriotism and nationalism are not exclusively the province of the DPRK, even if the DPRK's brand is particularly potent. The ROK, just over the southern border and joint heir to the history of the Korean peninsula, had its share of nationalist sentiment, as well. What particularly distinguishes DPRK nationalism from ROK nationalism is the degree to which that patriotism and nationalism is tied up in and focused on the legacy and person of one individual: Kim Il Sung. While the guerrilla narrative contains no explicit delineation of this point, it is clear from both the introduction and the context that a "true patriot" of the DPRK equates loyalty to the nation with loyalty to its Parent Leader. This interpretation would be borne out when twenty years later, four years after his death, the DPRK's constitution would be amended to make Kim Il Sung the president of the country eternally.[106]

Indeed, the guerrilla narrative impresses upon the reader the firm conviction that Kim Il Sung *is* the nation—it was he who "achieved the historic cause of national liberation" and "turned our poor and backward country into a rich, strong and developed socialist country."[107] In Myers's words, "North Korea regards the country's history as a

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average Korean would have known this about the word, as education in Chinese characters was generally only available to the elite scholar class, but it is an intriguing connection.

[106] Seth, *History of Korea*, p. 441.

[107] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. i.

long foreshadowing to Kim Il Sung, much as Christians see everything before the birth of Jesus as a *Vorgeschichte* or pre-history."[108] This equation of nation with leader is not the typical understanding of patriotism and nationalism, but it makes sense in the context of the larger ethnonationalist rhetoric of the DPRK. The greatness of the nation is due to the superiority, purity, and ethnic homogeneity of its people, and the Great Leader Comrade Kim Il Sung is the epitome of Korean ethnic virtues: he is "the most Korean Korean who ever lived."[109] Thus, total allegiance to the Great Leader, the symbol of the race and by extension the nation, *is* total allegiance to the nation.

Self-sacrifice

For those who love country and Parent Leader best, everything, including themselves, takes second place. The logical outcome of a love for country and Parent Leader greater than anything else is sacrificing oneself for their good. Self-sacrifice is a theme that is wound throughout the entire guerrilla narrative, usually appearing in conjunction with loyalty and patriotism. It is mentioned explicitly each time Kim Il Sung praises some group for their achievements; it is alluded to each time he encourages them to greater heights of revolutionary zeal.[110] This self-sacrifice can take many forms: time,

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[108] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 78.

[109] Myers, *Cleanest Race*, p. 100. The idea that North Koreans see themselves as the purest, most naive, most spontaneous, most innocent, and "cleanest race" is the premise for Myers's book.

[110] "On the Tasks for Improving the Work of the Young Communist League" (Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 63–74) is a good example of this pattern. It is medium-length in relation to the other essays in the guerrilla narrative, but contains two explicit references to self-sacrifice and another four allusions. Kim Il Sung opens the speech commending the YCL for their "unparalleled bravery, boldness and self-sacrificing spirit in battle" (p. 63–64), peppers allusions to self-sacrifice throughout his address, then closes by exhorting them to train the members of the

money, material support, ideological education. In an address to the people of Pochonbo, Kim Il Sung says, "You should … make an all-out effort in the solemn anti-Japanese war for the independence of Korea. Those who have strength should contribute strength, those who have knowledge should offer knowledge, those who have money should donate money."[111]

However, the ultimate self-sacrifice, the one emphasized over and over again in the mouth of the guerilla narrative's Kim Il Sung, is sacrifice of self to achieve the goals of the revolution. The rest of the paragraph after the quotation in the previous section about loyalty illustrates this nicely:

> A high degree of revolutionary determination and infinite loyalty to the revolution are the source of the strength of the people's guerrilla army and a decisive guarantee of its triumph over Japanese imperialism. So all its commanders and rank and file much equip themselves thoroughly with Marxism-Leninism and the strategy and tactics of the Korean revolution through diligent political studies and constantly temper themselves in the struggle. In this way they will acquire a firm revolutionary world outlook and be faithful to the revolution in any adversity.[112]

YCL to "devote all their bloom of youth and lives to the struggle for the Korean revolution." (p. 74).

[111] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 132 ("여러분은 … 온갖 성의와 열의를 다해서 … 힘있는 사람은 힘으로, 지식있는 사람은 지식으로, 돈있는 사람은 돈으로 조선독립을 위한 반일성전에 총[력]기하여야 하겠습니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 146). Perhaps due to a printing error, the second syllable of the sentence's main verb is illegible; I have attempted to recreate it using the text in the English volume as a basis.

[112] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 48 ("높은 혁명적각오, 혁명에 대한 무한한 충실성 (*ch'ungsilsŏng*)은 인민유격대가 일제를 타승하고 승리를 쟁취할수 있는 힘의 원천이며 결정적담보입니다. 그러므로 인민유격대의 모든 지휘간부들과 대원들은 정치학습을 강화하여 맑스-레닌주의와 조선혁명에 관한 전략전술로 튼튼히 무장하고 투쟁속에서 자신을 부단히 단련함으로써 혁명적세계관을 확고히 세우고 어떤 역경속에서도 혁명적지조를 지키나가도록 하여야 하겠습니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 53).

The Korean word used here for *temper*, like the English word, carries both literal and figurative connotations.[113] Tempering steel involves the application of intense heat to the metal, which transforms it and changes its properties. Using the word *temper* throughout the guerrilla narrative, Kim Il Sung suggests that like steel, the revolutionaries need to go through an intense transformative process. They experience this transformation 'in the heat of battle', as we say in English. This comparison is made explicit in a later essay: "No amount of … desperate efforts can help the Japanese imperialists to break the indomitable fighting spirit of the commanders and men of the KPRA tempered steel-like in arduous struggle[.]"[114] Nor is tempering a one-time event; Kim Il Sung exhorts them to "constantly temper themselves in the struggle."[115]

By far the most prevalent theme in the guerrilla narrative of the *Works* is that of armed struggle and revolution, and the importance of preparing for and engaging in it. In the 244 pages that contain the guerrilla narrative, no more than a handful are missing some mention of armed struggle or revolution. One easily identified example of this is the first four points of the Ten-Point Programme of the Association of the Restoration of

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[113] 단련하다 (*tanlyŏnhata*).

[114] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 193 ("일제놈들의 그 어떤 ... 발악적인 책동도 간고한 투쟁속에서 강철같이 단련된 조선인민 혁명군 지휘간부들과 전사들의 불굴의 투지를 꺾을수 없으며 항일무장투쟁의 승리적전진을 가로막을수 없습니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 212–13) Like the AJGPA, the Korean People's Revolutionary Army never existed.

[115] The word in Korean here translated as *struggle* is 투쟁 (*t'ujaeng*), but this is not consistent; other terms in Korean, such as 싸움 (*ssa'um*), are sometimes also translated as *struggle*. Alternatively, 투쟁 (*t'ujaeng*) is not always translated as *struggle*; sometimes it is rendered as *revolution* or *fight*. It is used to refer to both class or ideological struggle as well as to armed struggle.

the Fatherland, which all treat armed struggle and revolution directly.[116] This is not surprising given the nature of the time period the guerrilla narrative covers. However, the constant repetition and the conspicuous absence of consideration of any other kind of resistance drives home the idea that Kim Il Sung considers the highest expression of loyalty, patriotism, and self-sacrifice to be support of and service in the military.

How a Model Citizenry Promotes Regime Stability

The first volume of the *Works*, being as it is about a conflict-filled period in the history of Korea, contains an overwhelming amount of rhetoric about the value of the military and the vital necessity of maintaining the defensive capabilities of a nation. In the 1970s, the DPRK, in an effort to compensate for its smaller total population in relation to the ROK, and still convinced that forced reunification was a possibility, was dedicating a substantial portion of its resources to the military. Oberdorfer cites an estimated fifteen to twenty percent of the DPRK's expenses was devoted to military spending between the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, in contrast with the five to ten percent the ROK was spending.[117]

This agenda of prioritizing military spending over more pedestrian concerns like energy and consumer goods took a toll on the economy, and thus the standard of living began falling.[118] Perhaps even more to the point was the necessity of justifying the

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[116] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 112.

[117] Oberdorfer, *Two Koreas*, p. 98.

[118] Lankov, *Real North Korea*, p. 71–72; Buzo, *Guerilla Dynasty*, p. 174–75.

extensive military training required of every male citizen.[119] At this point, the DPRK's most recent conflict was the "Fatherland Liberation War" in the early 1950s, twenty-five years before the publication of the *Works*. Whatever the DPRK propaganda might tell their citizens about their country's "historic victory" over "the allied forces of foreign imperialism and the US imperialist stooges," in objective terms, it was a costly failure.[120] The war devastated the land, the population, and the economy, and it was still in living memory of members of the general population. DPRK propaganda might stridently paint itself as victorious in that war, but even then it was a "victory" obtained at great cost. That cost still scarred the lives, the land, and bodies of the people when the *Works* was published.

Dedicating a large portion of the national budget to the military instead of to the welfare of the people during peacetime would need some justification. Requiring people to serve long, intense years in military service would require even more. In the 1970s, almost every young man could expect to serve in the military for about six years with very little chance of receiving leave during that time. Their time in the service would be spent in rigorous political and military training, raising the vegetables for their unit, guard duty watches, and "work[ing] long hours in preparing the massive fortifications throughout [the DPRK.] They [were] assigned to dig tunnels, enlarge underground

[119] See Scalapino and Lee (*Communism in Korea: Part II*, p. 973–83) for an extensive description of the life of an average man serving in the DPRK military in the early 1970s, created from the accounts of defectors. They picture they paint is stark and bleak, including long hours of manual labor and almost no leave during the period of enlistment.

[120] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 7, p. 449. I did not have access to the Korean edition of this volume.

facilities, stock caves, and prepare in-depth frontline fortifications, including mine fields and electric-wire charges."[121]

The guerrilla narrative glorifies the armed revolutionary struggle of Kim Il Sung and his compatriots, holding them up as examples to emulate—and given the heights to which they had risen within the nation, they proved themselves as worthy exemplars. It then uses the persona of Kim Il Sung in the guerrilla narrative to establish that they, and by extension the people of the DPRK, are heirs to a noble warrior tradition stretching back far into Korea's history. The persona of Kim Il Sung effusively praises the people of long-ago, historical Korea as a people who "were not only resourceful and intrepid, but [also] regarded it as the most honourable thing to defend their country with all their devotion."[122]

The guerrilla narrative brings to life for the people of the DPRK a time that most of them did not remember first-hand. Unlike with the Korean War, there were no inconvenient scars to recall the fact that there are unpleasant consequences to war. It provided a glimpse into the life and early career of their Parent Leader; it was also a conflict that could be unequivocally hailed as a victory. Harking back to a victorious conflict, albeit by glossing over the truth of how that victory was achieved, is an effective

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[121] Scalapino and Lee, *Communism* (Part II), p. 973–983.

[122] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 206–07 ("슬기롭고 용맹하였을분아니라 조국의 방위를 위하여 충성(*ch'ungsŏng*)을 다하는것을 가장 영예로운 일로 생각하였습니다." Kim, *Chŏjakchip*, Vol. 1, p. 228) The word translated here as *devotion* is 충성(*ch'ungsŏng*). This is but a short excerpt from the almost four pages of this essay that are devoted to detailing the history of Koreans "fight[ing] indefatigably against foreign invaders in defence of the dignity of the nation." (p. 206) These pages are by far the most extensive use of this theme, but Kim Il Sung appeals to the tradition of Korean resistance from the Koryŏ period all the way down to the resistance movement in the early 1930s several times throughout the guerrilla narrative. For some examples, see p. 115, 130, 135, and 149.

way to take people's mind off of more recent failures and shortcomings and focus them on serving and sacrificing for their Leader and nation with pride.

CONCLUSION

Compiling the forty-eight volumes of the *Works* must have been a herculean task, even spread out over several years. They comprise essays covering a period spanning decades, nearly half a century, and thousands of pages of text. Ostensibly, the *Works* was compiled and published "to commemorate [Kim Il Sung's] 70th birthday," which would not actually occur until April 1982, three years *after* the *Works* was published in Korean, and two years after they were published in English. Whether or not they represent a completely factual compilation of Kim Il Sung's actual remarks and writings (unlikely), were fabricated by ghostwriter cogs in the DPRK propaganda machine (more likely), or are some combination of the two (probable), the amount of work and the number of people required to compile them must have been staggering.

The events swirling around the DPRK in the 1970s brought out the need for the regime to reinforce the values and narratives upon which the country was built to remind the people of both their proud ethnic and national heritage and the stature of their nation's leader. The persona of Kim Il Sung and the model citizenry that the guerrilla narrative creates recalls the values and victories of an earlier time—a proud time, a time of revolution and armed struggle. At the same time, the guerrilla narrative uses the model revolutionary citizenry brought to life by the persona of Kim Il Sung to inspire the present-day citizens of the DPRK to follow in their predecessors' footsteps, adjuring them to a greater commitment to military service and support.

Of course, because of the difficulty English-language scholarship, or any scholarship, has securing information about the experience of the average citizen of the DPRK, there is no way to know how effectively the guerrilla narrative accomplished its intended purpose. There are no bestseller lists to gauge how popular it was; there is no information on how many copies were published and distributed. Nor is there any reliable information on what Kim Il Sung truly thought about himself and the way his history was portrayed. It is safe to assume he had no strenuous objections, since if that were the case, the *Works* would never have been published. So much of what the world knows about the DPRK is from second-hand accounts and inferences gleaned from reading between the lines of official publications and statements.

The most important attribute to remember about *Works*, and particularly about its first twenty essays, is that while it purports to be a historical record, it is not. Its ostensible context is that of the Japanese colonial period, of guerrilla bases and victorious armed clashes with the enemy and nationalist fervor, but its actual context is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the late 1970s. When the *Works* was published, the days of those "victorious" clashes were long over. The pressing challenges facing the country during the 1970s, which heralded even greater challenges in the coming decades, were different than the ones that faced the Korean guerrillas in the 1930s and 1940s.

Kim Il Sung and the guerrilla compatriots that formed the DPRK's ruling elite were aging and tired, and he could no longer be as present as he had been. As the inexorable flow of time swept his accomplishments as a young man and revolutionary guerrilla leader farther and farther into history, he wanted to ensure his legacy would be

preserved for future generations of DPRK citizens. An increasing number of his people did not remember first-hand the events that had propelled him to supremacy, nor the circumstances that preceded them and gave them weight. The economy was in decline, just as the ROK's economy was booming. The larger nations that had supported him through the founding of his nation and the first decades of its existence were themselves changing, slowly moving away from the hardline ideology of yesteryear and making overtures toward the American imperialist aggressors, who had inherited in DPRK rhetoric the place formerly held by the Japanese. And the biggest change of all loomed ahead, as he prepared for his son to be named his successor and heir apparent.

Nevertheless, Kim Il Sung's dream of completing that aborted revolution had not abated. The first volume of the *Works* memorializes the fight against the Japanese imperialist aggressors and their successful ouster from the Korean peninsula. Another imperial power had arisen in their place, however—they had kept the revolution from total victory, and posed a real and imminent threat to its full realization in the present. Indeed, in reading the guerrilla narrative of the *Works* the constant exhortation to "unit[e] the broad masses under the anti-Japanese banner and educat[e] them in a revolutionary way" and the myriad mentions of the Japanese imperialists seem a thinly veiled reference to the American presence in the ROK, just over the DPRK's southern border.[123]

To complete that interrupted total revolution against imperialist aggression, he needed military power and the revolutionary guerrilla ethos to continue into the rising generations. For that to happen, he needed the support of the citizens of the DPRK. What better way to win them to his side than to draw them into his worldview and include them

[123] Kim, *Works*, Vol. 1, p. 61.

in his dreams? The persona of Kim Il-sung the *Works* creates was meant to instill confidence in the people of the DPRK during a time of significant change in their world. The *Works* showed them their Great Leader was confident and brilliant, a commander of the revolution that defeated the Japanese imperialist aggressors from the time he was but a youth—who better to expel the American imperialist aggressors than him? Surely he would lead them into the glorious future he so clearly foresaw fifty years ago!

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